

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 18704 051258Z

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 856

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18704

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ETRD, TH

SUBJECT: THAI REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN COTTON TEXTILE QUOTAS

REF: STATE 206807

1. ECON COUNSELOR CALLED ON DG FOREIGN TRADE SUTHI SEPTEMBER 5 AT SUTHI'S REQUEST TO DISCUSS SUBSTANCE OF REFTEL RELAYED TO SUTHI'S STAFF EARLIER IN WEEK. SUTHI MADE FOLLOWING POINTS: (A) RTG HAD IN JULY 8 NOTE REQUESTED FLEXIBILITY OF EXPORT CATEGORIES, WHICH HAD BEEN GRANTED IN PAST, RATHER THAN INCREASE IN QUOTAS UNDER AGREEMENT; (B) RTG CONTINUES TO BELIEVE QUESTION OF COTTON CONTRACT DELIQUENCIES IS PRIVATE COMMERCIAL MATTER WHICH SHOULD BE HANDLED IN COMMERCIAL OR LEGAL CHANNELS BY FIRMS CONCERNED, AND NOT RPT NOT UNDER THE TEXTILE AGREEMENT: (C) HE IS UNDER PRESSURE ON TEXTILE MATTERS FROM HIGH RANKING (BUT NOT IDENTIFIED) RTG OFFICIAL WHO IS MAJOR STOCKHOLDER IN THAI DURABLE COMPANY, WORST OFFENDER IN CONTRACT DEFAULT MATTER. (COMMENT: BOTH DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PARMARN AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS SURIN HAVE TEXTILE INDUSTRY BACKGROUNDS, BUT NEITHER IS KNOWN TO BE CONNECTED WITH THAI DURABLE); (D) UN ADDITION PARA (C) ABOVE CONNECTION, THAI DURABLE CONTINUES TO FEND OFF RTG PRESSURE FOR COTTON CONTRACT COMPLIANCE WITH COMPLAINT THAT RTG FAILED TO INTERVENE WITH USG WHEN DUPONT COMPANY ALLEGEDLY DEFAULTED ON CONTRACT TO SUPPLY RAW MATERIALS TO THAI DURABLE IN 1973: (E) US POSITION WOULD PUNISH INNOCENT

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 18704 051258Z

ALONG WITH GUILTY.

2. ECON COUNSELOR (1) STRESSED USG WOULD BE PREPARED TO RECONSIDER RTG REQUEST FOR CATEGORY FLEXIBILITY IF RTG CAN EXCLUDE MAJOR DEFAULTERS FROM SHARING IN THAI EXPORT QUOTA TO US: (2) INDICATED RTG WILL HAVE OPPORTUNITY IN TALKS SCHEDULED BEGIN SEPTEMBER 29 TO MAKE NEW APPEAL FOR ADDITIONAL FLEXIBILITY UNDER COTTON TEXTILE AGREEMENT: (3) SUTHI MADE CLEAR THAT USG WAS NOT WITHDRAWING ANYTHING PREVIOUSLY GRANTED TO THAI SIDE UNDER COTTON TEXTILE AGREEMENT.

3. ECON COUNSELOR FINESSED DUPONT ISSUE RAISED BY SUTHI, SINCE FACTS THIS CASE NOT CLEAR HERE. IF POSSIBLE WE WOULD APPRECIATE INFORMATION ON POSSIBLE PARALLELS WITH COTTON CONTRACT CASE. WE ASSUME CONTRACTS WERE WRITTEN IN QUITE DIFFERENT MANNER.

4. SUTHI CONCLUDED BY SAYING HE WOULD CONSULT WITH HIS SUPERIORS ON WHAT TO DO NEXT. THAI EXPORTERS ARE CLAMORING FOR ACTION AND MUST BE TOLD WHY USG REFUSED TO GRANT FLEXIBILITY. THIS PROBLEM, SUTHI WARNED, COULD RESULT IN ANTAGONISTIC PRESS COMMENT PLANTED BY THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY.
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